

Mr. Speaker, the protection of America's lakes, rivers, streams, and near coastal waters should indeed be one of our top concerns as a Nation, and I am proud and honored to be an original cosponsor of this important piece of legislation. The DeLauro-Lowey bill is a reasonable, straightforward measure that seeks to build upon past successes under the Clean Water Act (CWA). This measure will continue and strengthen several progressive programs to protect and enhance water bodies throughout our country, and I urge my colleagues to support this common sense and cost effective means of cleaning-up and protecting our water resources.

The DeLauro-Lowey bill will ensure that the existing State Revolving Loan Fund (SRF) program continues to be adequately funded to provide the financial wherewithal for States and municipalities to maintain and upgrade their wastewater treatment facilities to protect America's water bodies. This program has achieved tremendous success in the past and clearly deserves to be maintained and enhanced.

While fresh water is important for life itself, and clean lakes and rivers provide a multitude of recreational benefits to society, the vitality of our estuaries is also of great importance. Estuaries, near coastal waters, play a dual function of protecting coastal lands as well as serving as the all important nursery grounds for most marine species. Of course, these waters also provide many important recreational activities.

The Congresswomen's legislation will serve to strengthen the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's existing National Estuary Program (NEP) that is widely regarded as a model for watershed-based pollution control. In addition, the legislation will clarify EPA's responsibility to assist States in developing and implementing their estuary management plans.

Mr. Speaker, as the Representative of the 7th Congressional District of New York, which includes a substantial portion of the Long Island Sound coastline, and a Member of the House Committee on Resources, I can think of few efforts more important to our environment. I intend to work closely with Congresswoman LOWEY and Congresswoman DELAURO to ensure we enact this vital measure into law early on in the 106th Congress.

TRIBUTE TO QUENTIN AND ELLEN BURKE

HON. DUNCAN HUNTER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 11, 1999

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the outstanding service and dedication of two of my constituents, Quentin and Ellen Burke of Imperial County. It is my understanding that Mr. and Mrs. Burke will be retiring after working for 34 years with the American Field Service (AFS), the international student exchange program.

Mr. and Mrs. Burke, who were publishers of the Holtville Tribune for 25 years, began their dedicated service to AFS in 1964 when they interviewed a visiting student, Helen Keel, from Switzerland and became excited about the program. Soon thereafter, they began to regularly print articles and photographs in their

weekly newspaper regarding AFS activities and events. For 15 years, Ellen acted as liaison between the Imperial Valley chapter and AFS international.

During the past three decades, Quentin and Ellen Burke have served as hosts for foreign students, worked with local families to open their homes and encouraged American students to travel abroad for the opportunity and experience to learn about other lands and cultures. I firmly believe that through their efforts with AFS, Mr. and Mrs. Burke have made a contribution to promoting peace through the global exchange of ideas, the sharing of customs and the collaboration of knowledge. On March 21, friends and family will gather in El Centro to honor this generous and caring couple. I would like to join with these individuals in honoring Mr. and Mrs. Burke for all their remarkable achievements and wishing them great happiness and success in all their future endeavors.

TRIBUTE TO BEN ALEXANDER

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 11, 1999

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to take this opportunity to recognize former state Senator Ben Alexander who, for the last four years, has provided strong leadership and a dynamic voice for Western Colorado in the Colorado General Assembly. In doing so, I would like to pay tribute to my friend for his distinguished service and wish him well in all of his future endeavors.

Following his election to the state Senate in 1994, Senator Alexander rose through the rank and file with unprecedented speed serving as Vice-chairman of the Senate Finance Committee in his first year in the legislature. In just his third year, Senator Alexander was named Chairman of the powerful Senate Education Committee where he would play a leading role in shaping Colorado's education policy for the next two years. In addition to his duties as chairman, Senator Alexander also provided powerful leadership on the Senate's Finance and Business Affairs and Labor committees.

In addition to his service in the Colorado legislature, Senator Alexander also served his country distinguishedly and with great valor as an F-111 pilot for the Air Force during the Vietnam War. Senator Alexander's remarkable bravery during his 69 air combat missions earned him the Distinguished Flying Cross and Air Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters as well as the respect and gratitude of those familiar with his extraordinary sacrifices.

Senator Alexander's eagerness to serve the American people, both as a pilot and legislator, has won him the unwavering esteem and admiration of friends and colleagues alike. It is clear that Colorado is a better place because of his remarkable service.

It is with this, Mr. Speaker, that I pay tribute to this true public servant and friend for his extraordinary efforts and wish him all the best in each of his future endeavors.

INTRODUCTION OF THE MEDICARE FULL ACCESS TO CANCER TREATMENT ACT

HON. GENE GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 11, 1999

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the Medicare Full Access to Cancer Treatment Act. This bill is critical to protect the Medicare beneficiary's access to the newest and best treatments for cancer.

The BBA of 1997 directed HCFA to implement a prospective payment system (PPS) for hospital outpatient services provided through the Medicare program. When Congress passed this requirement, we recognized that some services would be difficult or impossible to include in a PPS and therefore authorized HCFA to use its discretion to exclude certain services from the payment system. Unfortunately, under their proposed rule, HCFA would bundle the costs of all cancer drugs into a small number of Ambulatory Payment Categories (APCs) and pay hospitals only for the average cost of these services.

The main problem with this proposal is that it fails to recognize the complexities of cancer treatments and the wide range and individual needs of each patient with cancer. As a result, the new payment system could threaten the quality and availability of cancer treatment for Medicare beneficiaries. In fact, under HCFA's plan, the lowest reimbursement rate for some cancer treatments would be only \$52.70 (which is expected to include supportive care such as anti-nausea drugs)! Moreover, under the proposal, new drugs, which are defined as anything after 1996, would be reimbursed at this lowest rate. Such a policy would have a crippling effect on research and development for new drug therapies.

This policy will create an overall reduction in the quality of patient care since hospitals will be pressured to provide the least expensive, rather than the most effective treatment. Moreover, research and development for new drug therapies may be diminished or delayed, ultimately denying the patients of today and those of future generations access to more effective treatments.

To correct this problem, the Medicare Full Access to Cancer Treatment Act would carve-out cancer treatment from the outpatient PPS. This simple yet sensible action would fully protect Medicare beneficiaries' continued access to the best and most effective cancer care.

I am pleased to introduce this legislation with over twenty bipartisan original cosponsors as well as the support of several patient and provider organizations, including Center for Patient Advocacy, National Alliance of Breast Cancer Organizations, Cancer Care, Inc., Cancer Research Foundation of America, Oncology Nursing Society, Association of Community Cancer Centers, Lymphoma Research Foundation of America, Alliance for Lung Cancer Advocacy, Support and Education, Lupus Foundation of America, US-TOO International and the Multiple Myeloma Research Foundation.